

“N Sabili N Sabili Ngo”

History and Context of “N Sabili N Sabili Ngo”

As told by Baba Issahaku Yuysif to Alhassan Saeed Dawuni and Fuseini Abdul-Fatawu
24 January 2019.

Kpalsi, Tamale, Ghana.

Text transcribed and translated by John Alhaasan Issah

Question: Bo n-lee be nsabili yilli ɲo ni, wula ka di daa kana and wula ka di yeri maa?

Translation: What is in this music book you called “N Sabili”? What is the content and the history behind it?

Response: Lala yilli ɲo yuli m-booni “N Sabili.” Daliri din daa che ka Afa daa sabi li daa nyela o daa bela Dr. Kwame Nkrumah yaɣili. O mi ni daa be o siiasi yaɣili maa o daa nyela o kpamba maa yino. Din daa ti nin ka Nigeria ti yen deegi independence ka di mali bukaata ni Ghananima gba chan nimaani nti nye be suɣisuɲ maa ni nye shem. Ka be daa chani maa ka yihi Ghana boba zaa kpamba. Northern Regiona ɲo kpamba daa nyela niriba anahi ban pa karachinima. Be yino n-daa nye Afa Ajura, ɲun pahi n-daa nye Alhaj Yahaya Iddi, ka Alhaj Mahamud Zero ka ɲun pahiri anahi nye Alhaj Mumuni D.C. Be ni daa chan ka kuna maa ka Afa bori ni o nyaanga zaa ban o nimɔhi ni daa paai shem. Pa karim yaɣili maa konko ka o daa be amaa tingban maa sɔɲsim gba o daa be dini. Ka daa sabi waaka zan sɔɲ. Lala waaka mi, Voɣu Alhaj Iddrisu sani ka n daa chan ti sabili. ɲun n-daa lahi wuhi ma li yaha. Dinzuɣu ka o daa sabi lala waaka ɲo n-yeri di puuni.

Translation: This particular song is known as “N Sabili.” The story or why Afa Ajura wrote this music is traced back to the days of the first president of Ghana, Dr. Kwame Nkrumah. Afa Ajura was a strong Nkrumah follower. One of the leading supporters of Nkrumah. When it happened that Nigeria had its Independence in 1960, and Ghana was to send a delegation to the occasion to share the joy of Nigeria, Afa Ajura was a member of that delegation. The Ghana delegation was chosen from all the regions of the country. The Northern Region had four members in the delegation. Afa Ajura Yussif was a member, Alhaj Yahaya Iddi was a member, Alhaj Mahamud Zero was a member, and the fourth member was Alhaj Mumuni D.C.

After their return, Afa Ajura composed the song to let his followers know that apart from his religious life, he also performed public services to the nation. The song tells the story that apart from being a prominent preacher, he also offered services to his nation and beyond. This is why he wrote the *waaka* (song). As I narrate this story, I contacted Voɣu Alhaj Iddrisu to get it written. Afa Ejura wrote this *waaka* saying... (Starts singing

“N Sabili N Sabili Ngo”

what Afa Ejura Yussif narrated in their visit to NIgeria mentioning all those who were on the delegation. He was singing the praises of Ghana as in “N Sabili.” He also mentions the names of paramount personalities of Nigeria).